DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 181 047 TM 009 938

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TITLE Legislative Evaluation.
PUB DATE [Nov 76]
NOTE 13p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Evaluation Network (2nd, St. Louis, MO, November 8-10, 1976): Best copy available

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Change Strategies: Decision Making: Evaluation Methods: *Evaluation Needs: *Evaluators: Federal Aid: Federal Government: Federal Legislation: *Federal Programs: Government Role: *Legislators: Political Power: *Program Evaluation

ABSTRACT

The speaker discusses Congressional program evaluation. From the Congressional perspective, good evaluators understand the political, social, and economic processes: are familiar with various evaluation methods: and know how to use authority and power within their roles. Program evaluation serves three major purposes: to anticipate social impact or predict an event: to supervise and control the executive's operation of ongoing programs: and to supervise and control the executive branch after a program has reached its conclusion. Some factors which are significant for Congressional program evaluation are: inclusion of Title VII and Title VIII in the Congressional Budget and the Impoundment Control Act of 1974: the establishment of a Division of Program Analysis in the General Accounting Office (GAO): guides of program-related information jointly prepared by GAO and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB): and the GAO document, "Evaluation Analysis to Support Decision Making." Other legislative activities to facilitate evaluation include the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970: the Bolling Committee Reform Resolution--H.R. 988: the Technological Assessment Act of 1972: and the OMB directive that all government agencies include an evaluation section when submitting proposals for new funding. (A question and answer section is appended.) (MH)

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LEGISLATIVE EVALUATION

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It's a pleasure to be here today, meeting with a new group of persons who are interested in program evaluation. I want to especially thank Bob Ingle and Jim Sanders and others in the Evaluation Network for giving me the opportunity to appear. Standing here under the, what I perceive to be a characterization of Scandinavian Gods, it reminds me of what the place of evaluators is. They are standing between myth and reality.

In the legislative arena, we have much debate, for instance, on Veteran's programs, on child care provisions. Many times we'll hear the argument, "well, if it's a veteran's program it must be good, if it deals with childcare, we must have it." The time has come for change, and many people in Congress recognize that more information and better evaluation is needed in order to make program decisions especially within the so-called "untouchable" areas and other areas which have traditionally been hotly debated.

My talk will focus on recent developments in Congressional program evaluation. But first let me discuss a couple of definitions of evaluators. One definition of an evaluator that I've heard is a person who wears a big S on his or her chest. Few of us are super-persons but evaluators often have to have a little salesman-scientist-manger-politician and in some cases courtier in them. Legislative critics might say an evaluator is a disaster waiting to happen. In some ways, they are right. Evaluation of programs will often fail in whole or part. We must build into the present system the recognition that we will have a great number of failures. The analogy I like to give on this point is, when a new jet engine is being developed many times five or even a dozen models of the jet engine will be used up before one is gotten to run 500 hours. We must again, build into the legislative process, the recognition that evaluations, as do jet engines, may well fail, especially in this very early evaluation development stage.

Evaluators are also social inventors. As Dr. Deniston has shown, a constellation of factors must be considered when evaluating programs. An area of these factors can be considered problems waiting for invention. Within the legislative process various inventions based on program evaluations are and will continue to shape policy. Frankly, the question is how much program evaluation will be undertaken *not* should we use it?

From the legislative perspective, there are a number of vital components that make up a good evaluator. This involves knowledge of process, including the political, social, and economic processes; knowledge of evaluation techniques, in other words, knowledge of everything from a case study to an experiment and what might be appropriate in any given situation; knowledge of the scientific method; and finally, for those evaluators who come in contact with legislators and their staffs, they must have an understanding of how to influence and be able to act out evaluator roles with an understanding of the related concepts of authority and power. My presentation today rests on this characterization of the ideal attributes of an evaluator. But, let me point out that I don't do evaluations and my role in Congress has been to try to encourage and facilitate the development and use of program evaluations and not to actually carry them out.

What is program evaluation? From the Congressional perspective, program evaluation is best described as a technique of oversight. Program evaluation as an oversight tool can be utilized for both fiscal and analytical purposes. Basically, program evaluation serves three major purposes. First, it may be used as a tool for anticipating social impact or predicting an event – the outcome of government programs. In recent times this has been called foresight. For instance, a pilot test may be established for a variety of health insurance proposals before a national health insurance plan is adopted. Second, program evaluation is used as a way to supervise and control the executive's operation of ongoing programs. This type of program evaluation entails a close working relationship before, during and after program implementation. This type of evaluation may be called comprehensive or functional evaluation, my term for this within the legislative context is throughsight or throughoutsight. Third, program evaluation may be used as a tool for supervision and control of the executive after the program has reached its conclusion. This is sometimes called impact evaluation. Often this entails posthoc review of the operation of government programs. Posthoc review may involve an audit, cost-benefit analysis, or any number of evaluation techniques. This has been the most often used type of evaluation by the legislative branch. Of special note are the audits that have been preformed by the General Accounting Office.

Let me review – three types of oversight that I just mentioned: foresight, throughsight and aftersight. Each of these have program evaluation components. Program evaluation can be viewed as a wide-ranging tool for social analysis and supervision. Everything from a case study to an experiment and in-between is broadly defined as an evaluation technique. It's important to know that there are literally hundreds of program evaluation techniques that might be utilized by the legislative branch. Committees of Congress see program evaluation as one of the most important new areas of oversight.

Program evaluation involves the analysis of government activities at the program level. Measures of program effectiveness, economy, responsiveness, and efficiency can be developed to tell committees the effect in human terms of government programs. As the state of the act of measurement improves, committees will be better able to review program success. These concepts are extremely important. We've just elected a vice-president who understands what problems we face in terms of measuring programs in human terms. I've heard him speak on a number of occasions about this. And I would hope that he will operationalize some of his thinking within the new

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administration. We have great hope for the new administration, especially for increasing the impact of program evaluators. And in the long term we have to do analysis which will allow us to look at programs in human terms and to talk about them so that the general population can understand what's happening within the various programs.

Congressional and other legislative users of evaluation might well focus on the following steps for building sound evidence before deciding how to allocate authorizations and appropriations. Step one, you need to select questions to be answered and evaluation techniques to be used. Step two, you need to draft legislative language. Step three, there is a need to formulate goals and terms. In the last presentation and discussion which followed we got into a debate about the conflicting goals and terms that various programs either mandate or make implicit in the program design. I think this conflict will probably always be with us. Senator Javits and Senator Buckley, different types of senators, many times will have different goals for the same program. I think the job of the evaluator is to look at these goals and to try to provide information to the respective senators about their objectives for that program. Step four, we need to look at measures. Dr. Deniston alluded for a need to have evaluation information at the right time. Time and measures are closely related. For instance, a fellow talked to me just the other day about a study he was doing of a land distribution program which was undertaken during the Depression. In the South, there were a few blacks that were given land under this program. His followup study, completed in the last couple of years, has shown that the families of the black people that received the land were very active in the Civil Rights Movement of the 60's. So many times we'll not see the impact of a program for maybe 10, 20, or 30 years or even generations. We have to be prepared to wait before we make final decisions about some programs. Step five, you have to pay attention to design. Step six, the statistical analysis. And step seven, format for evaluation studies. I could take the time to go into these steps in great detail but rather than burden you with that I will refer you to "Program Evaluation: A Manual for Legislators and Legislative Staffs" that Bill Foskett and I have written which lays out these steps for legislators and their staffs.

In the last few years a number of things have happened that have significance for Congressional program evaluation. Perhaps the most important action that has occurred in recent times is the inclusion of Title VII, "Program Review and Evaluation," within the Congressional Budget and the Impoundment Control Act of 1974. Senator Brock, who I've worked with over the last 4½ years introduced a budget bill in 1972 which included a Title dealing with pilot testing. When I took over the handling of this bill within the Senate Government Operations Committee, it became immediately obvious to me that we needed to expand the concept to include all of program evaluation. We were able to keep this expanded Title within the bill throughout the legislative process. It provides that the General Accounting Office establish an Office of Program Review and Evaluation and that the Congressional Budget Office give attention to program evaluation techniques. The General Accounting Office has recently established a Division of Program Analysis. Not exactly what we had in mind, frankly, but it satisfies to some degree the intent of Title VII. The General Accounting Office has up to this time not been activist in promoting program evaluation. Hopefully in the near future the Division of Program Analysis will develop strategy that will promote evaluation. As the staff of the Division of Program Analysis become active advocates, we can expect that Congressional interest in this oversight will increase.

In addition, Title VII provides that the committees may analyze, appraise, or evaluate government programs themselves by contract and/or require a government agency to furnish an evaluation report. We have to realize that Congress will never do very many evaluations, even through their support agencies like the General Accounting Office. We have to depend almost totally on the executive for evaluations. This presents, I think some major problems as all of you can readily perceive. Throughout this talk I'll be coming back to this problem as it is one of the major tasks that we face. Also within Title VII, methods such as "pilot testing, analysis of cost and comparison with benefits, or provision for evaluation after a defined period of time," may be used in program evaluation review.

The General Accounting Office in cooperation with the Office of Management and Budget and the executive departments has recently developed "a series of directories which reflect an inventory of program-related information." These guides will go a long way to help Congress utilize evaluation information. As the General Accounting Office points out in a recent report, they are involved in the "initial stages of helping Congress obtain the information it needs to better evaluate federal programs." Again, this operation is very much in its infancy and a friend within GAO, Ken Hunter, is trying to put it together. He has great ambitions but you might imagine pulling all this information together and making it available in a useable form is going to test the imaginations of many, many people.

Recently a document entitled "Evaluation Analysis to Support Decision-Making" has been developed within the GAO to help decision makers throughout government. Its intended purpose is to "encourage more effective use of evaluation decision making."

The Congressional Budget Act gives the budget committees responsibility for continuing study of additional budget reform proposals including but not limited to "(1) improving information base required for determining the effectiveness of new programs by such means as pilot-testing, survey research and other experimental and analytical techniques; (2) improving analytical and systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of the existing programs." There are also some other tools that they were given the opportunity to look at which I won't go over. If you are interested in evaluation, it might be well worth looking at Title VII and Title VIII of the Congressional Budget Act. Title VIII, amends Sections 201 and 202 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970. It provides for expanding legislative fiscal and budgetary information controls. The intent of this Title is to encourage the continued cooperation of the Treasury Department, and the Office of Management and Budget with the GAO to satisfy Congressional information needs. The information that will become available under this Title is vital to responsible growth of the Congressional program evaluation and oversight.

On the whole, Congressional interest in program evaluation has increased since the establishment of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974. This act, as I see it, includes three vital components. First, it establishes a process for congressional budget making. This component received most of the time and attention of staff and legislators during the development of this legislation. Second, through Title VIII an information gathering process is developed. This Title was built, as I noted earlier, upon the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970. Third, Title VII provides for program review and evaluation. In my mind the congressional budget process will not work properly unless information is provided to Congress in a form which can be readily assimilated and proper evaluations are provided at the program level. Without information and evaluation, the level of debate in the Congress will remain superficial and based mainly on ideological and knee-jerk tenets. Additionally, program evaluation will allow Congress to truely involve itself in a significant oversight strategy.

There have been other legislative activities which have facilitated evaluation within Congress. These include the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970, the Bolling Committee Reform Resolution – H.R. 988, and the Technological Assessment Act of 1972. Reforms mandated by the House Democratic Caucus and efforts by the young Senators group are other means by which Congressional program evaluation potential has been increased. The Office of Technological Assessment has already received numerous committee requests for studies. Conceivably such studies can structure committee hearings and meetings, provide suggestions for statutory or non-statutory control in the government programs and formulate program evaluation standards.

Recently the Office of Management and Budget has directed that all government agencies include an evaluation section in proposals for new funding. This directive will assist the Congress in reviewing new programs. In addition, the program evaluation staff within the Office of Management and Budget is working very closely with staffs of the General Accounting Office and listening to various other Congressional pursuers of evaluation. As I see it, a natural alliance between OMB and the Congress underlies successful program evaluation. Both the Executive Office of the President and the Congress need evaluation based information to make policy and management decisions. Therefore it is in both their interests to cooperate in making sure that this information is made available. As neither the Congress nor the Executive Office of the President can actually perform many evaluations, they must depend upon the executive departments and agencies for evaluation information. This necessitates careful direction and continually asking questions that will encourage agencies to produce timely and useable evaluations.

Now for some specifics about Senate staff perceptions and utilization of program evaluation. Fully, 85 percent of those responding to a questionnaire administered by the Temporary Select Committee to Study the Committee System in the summer of 1976 thought that evaluation of agency programs was a moderately to very effective oversight tool. The frequency of use of program evaluation varies widely. Approximately 20 percent of the respondents used it once a week or more. Nearly 70 percent used evaluation of agency programs between once a year and once a month, the rest of the responding staff members, 10 percent did not use it at all. In comparing the frequency of use and perceived effectiveness of program evaluation to other oversight techniques, program evaluation is in the top 40 percent of each scale. Evaluation of agency programs is used more frequently than 10 to 16 oversight techniques. Staff communication with agency personnel, case work, hearings and meetings, senators' personal communication with agency officials, and staff investigations are more frequently used by Senate staff professionals. Evaluation is said to be one of the top five of sixteen in terms of its effectiveness. Only hearings and meetings, staff communication with agency personnel, staff investigations, and audits of agency programs are seen as being more effective oversight technqiues.

Also committee staff find that on the whole a lack of staff expertise in specific areas needed to evaluation agency programs is at least a minor problem. Fully 65 percent of staff responding feel that something must be done to upgrade staff expertise in evaluation. Various solutions to this problem might be tried. One, more staff training both within and outside Congress; two, recruitment of evaluation experts to fill committee professional staff positions; three creation of a Program Evaluation Office within the Congress or in a support agency such as the General Accounting Office or the Congressional Budget Office.

Program evaluation will continue to be utilized at an ever increasing rate within the legislative branch. As it is in its infancy, Congress should not and hopefully does not expect miracles. Through the continued support of program evaluation efforts by the GAO, OMB, OTA, CBO, CRS and other alphabetical support agencies Congess will be able to better meet the challenges of improving programs through evaluation.

A number of improvements in the present system would allow more and better program evaluation. These include (1) a more activist General Accounting Office and (2) opportunities for staff training in program evaluation. One of the basic tenets of the evaluation network is to assist the education of evaluators and their clients both pre-service and in-service. I think this is a very laudable goal. For instance, within the legislative branch, two efforts are being made to educate staff about basic economics – efforts through the University of Virginia and the University of Miami of Florida. Parallel efforts could be mounted focusing on program evaluation. Also within the Congress we are receiving fellows from the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Political Science Association, who are schooled in evaluation or knowledgeable about the area. This is helpful. I'd also like to make note of a recent National Institute of Education grant to the Center of Evaluation, which Jane Beer pointed out to me last night. This grant will allow California State legislators and their staff to become more informed about evaluation. I think this is the type of activity that needs to be encouraged and hopefully we can replicate this effort in other States and within the federal government. We also need to recruit committee staff evaluation experts. Presently over 40 percent of professional staff on committees are attorneys. Many times their training does not prepare them to look at the broad range of evaluation techniques which are available. We need to encourage people

who have an exposure to evaluation to become legislative staff members. This includes many types of people in terms of their background. For instance, one of the best evaluation efforts underway within the Senate is taking place within the Senate Agriculture Committee and it's being headed up by a former investigative reporter.

We need the continued cooperation of the General Accounting Office, the Treasury Department, and OMB in efforts to improve information systems within government, especially as this affects the dissemination of program evaluation information. We need improved evaluation services within the Congressional Research service including more staff in technical capacities. The Congressional Budget Office should assume a support role for Congressional program evaluation. As many of you know Alice Rivlin is one of the big names in evaluations and she has taken a stand that the Congressional Budget Office, which she heads, is not to take part in most program evaluation efforts. This decision under cuts, over the long term, many analytical options for budget making. In addition, Office of Technology Assessment should make available on a generic level its knowledge about evaluation techniques that have been useful to Congressional committees.

Opportunities for program evaluation within the Congress are growing. Congress will utilize modern program evaluation technology but it needs ever increasing program evaluation inventions to satisfy its needs. Will you help?

If you will, here are some suggestions on how to assist. A few persons like yourself need to become active lobbyists. Let me say that lobbyist is not a four letter word.

How can you be effective lobbyists? Well, first of all we must realize that legislators at all levels, even those who understand, appreciate, and have taken part in evaluations, do not have time to read evaluation reports or even executive summaries. Joe Wholley, who's an evaluator at the Urban Institute, and also a local legislator, recently gave a pretty good description of what happens to him. He says, "I get all these evaluation studies dealing with the county and they pile up on my desk and they pile up and they pile up. When they get so high I just file them away. I never read them." Legislators never read, or very rarely ever read evaluation reports. So what can you do? Well, one of the most effective ways "to get to" legislators is through phoning them. Most legislators return phone calls or have their staff return phone calls. Another way is to write letters. Many times, especially at the federal level, legislators will not read every letter but if they get 10 or 20 or 30 or 50 letters on a particular subject their staff will say, "You know we're getting alot of interest in this topic. Why don't you do something?" You also can support fellowships like the AAAS fellows, the American Political Science fellows and perhaps encourage members of the Congress to establish their own fellowship programs. Within Senator Brock's office we established a fellowship program which brought two dozen Ph.D.'s into our office over the last three years. They had tremendous effects. They developed, for instance, the women's credit bill. We developed health care bills and so forth. This type of assistance, especially from persons who have evaluation backgrounds, can be invaluable. Let me just say this, if you're involved in a fellowship yourself or going about trying to encourage the establishment of fellowships I think the best place to position fellows is within the personal office of the member. Many times professionals will want to get tied into a committee where they're comfortable in terms of subject matter. I think a fellow can have a much greater impact within the personal office of a member where in fact they become one of his chief counsels.

You also need to break into the cozy triangles. Some of you are in them already but those of you who are not you need to join them. The cozy triangle is made up of the staff on the committee with legislative jurisdiction, the executive department persons, and interested outside persons such as what we generally call lobbyist. These three groups of people many times determine policy within particular areas. It's important to break in and insist that they utilize evaluations in their planning and program implementation.

I think the future of the nation depends to some extent on the social inventions that you, as evaluators will make and "sell" to policy makers. With confidence in government at an all time low, elected officials must utilize program evaluation and related social inventions to cultivate the confidence of our citizens in government. Justifying programs on the basis of ideology is I think, passe. Citizens are demanding more and you have the opportunity to help satisfy their demands.

Discussion

Question: Do you think the evaluator can maintain any kind of integrity whatsoever in his attempt to break into the cozy triangle?

Answer: There are a number of schools of thought. There are the people who think you have to be a purist. Don't modify your goals at all. If you can't institute a "perfect" evaluation then don't get involved. I personally think the state of the art is such that any increased attention that we can generate within the legislative process would be helpful and my own personal opinion is that we need to make an effort and be satisfied with small gains in the beginning and hopefully we can make both the legislator and the citizen aware of the importance of this tool.

Question: It seems to me that Ralph Nader helped by staying away from the cozy triangle and probably has had greater impact. I don't quite get a handle on how and why you're suggesting a plan to bring us into the cozy triangle.

Answer: Well, he's developing his own cozy triangles. He has created relationships with many congressmen, staff people, and others within executive departments. They may not be as visible as some others, but he's developing his own contacts. He has a flair for gaining publicity which has helped him push his views along. I think we need people like that in the evaluation area. We need people who are flashy; who have a little sex appeal that can attract the attention of voters and legislators.

Question: What do you mean by "evaluating programs in human terms."

Answer: The question was, I talked earlier about the need for explaining programs in human terms or evaluating them in human terms, what does this mean? Well, there are a number of techniques, including many evaluation

techniques which operationalize the concept. For instance, there is a Human Resource Accounting method which was developed at the University of Michigan and is now I believe being updated at the University of Minnesota. Bill Pyle is developing this technique. It is based on traditional accounting procedures and he's utilizing it with success, especially in the manpower area. He has mainly been working with corporations, large corporations, and analyzing how well manpower training programs are working out.

It seems to me that almost any evaluation technique tells you a little bit about what's happening to human beings. Are they being made well? Are they being better educated? My own personal belief is that we're presently building up a pool of measures which will be aggregated together, maybe in two or three different ways, to develop what may be characterized as social accounts. Today we have the economic accounts which we call our budgets. I think that within fifteen or twenty years we'll have a parallel set of accounts which can be characterized perhaps as social accounts. When we have those accounts in place, you'll see a give and take – do we want to spend this much money for this result? And you'll hopefully get a better balance between the "was the money spent?" type of mentality and "how does it effect people and is it working?" or "should we put the money into helping to eradicate cancer or should we put it into highway safety publicity or whatever?" approach. We need more indicators of what's happening to social programs in human terms. Almost anything you deal with, to summarize, in program evaluation deals with human terms. The problem that we face now is aggregating the human terms dimension in a fashion that will be useful to policy makers on a broader level than just the program level. We're going to have to spend a number of years looking at programs. As we start developing measures which are accepted then we can start aggregating them, and looking at broad policy areas.

Question: It seems to me that development of evaluation methods are dependent to a large extent on action by government which comes as a result of responses to a request for a proposal (RFP). Now the Congress passes a law, the law states the intent and within the executive branch somebody turns that into an interpretation. If we try to become lobbyists and it sometimes takes a long, long time to get through, have you any suggestions for the kinds of responses that evaluators or people following the development of a program might make when they are faced with RFP's that seem to be irrelevant to the intent of Congress?

Answer: Well you can complain to the executive agency which has formulated the RFB. You can perhaps intervene by calling it to the attention of the committee that has original legislative jurisdiction over the program. It gets back to my interest in evaluation from the legislative perspective, we just have to assist in the development of an awareness among legislators and their staffs of the importance of these proceudres. And we have to keep an eye on them. There are over 3,000 programs which are presently funded by the Federal Government. And just as an aside, we *just* found this out this summer. In my present job, I mandated this be done by the General Accounting Office. They had already built a considerable information base listing the 1,400 appropriation accounts. We broke down each appropriation account into programs. Then we separated these programs by committee. So for the first time, committees in Congress knew which programs they are responsible for. Once committees know the programs that they are responsible for during the budget making process, they're beginning, among the staff people especially, to say, "How do we justify this program? What information is available?" The General Accounting Office is receiving a great number of requests for "anything that's been done" on the various programs within a committee's jurisdiction. It's just a matter of time until all committees realize the importance of evaluation information.

Let me make one other point. We have to build into, and I eluded to this earlier, the evaluation process the idea that sometimes it will be impossible to do an evaluation. We must recognize that legislators will make program decisions based on little or no evaluation information. They will have to act based on their gut feeling. We have to recognize that this is going to happen in some instances. We should approach evaluation with the idea that there's certain areas that especially lend themselves to evaluation and we should emphasize those. Manpower programs is one area that is a very fruitful area to emphasize. Education is another. In the education area, we have to be prepared for the long term evaluation, sometimes fifteen, even twenty years. That is a hard thing to sell to a member who is elected every two years, but these are points that we have to get across. We have to do it within the legislative community as well as within the broader citizen population.

Question: It seems to be one of your basic contentions that more evaluation is better. It is not. I want to ask two questions. First, it seems to me much of what you've said is very reminiscent in my mind to the early promotion of PPBS. We've had a decade of experience since then including spending hundreds of millions of dollars on evaluation of education and manpower programs, two areas which you say are acceptable. I would like to hear you talk about what you think has been learned from that. The second question I wanted to ask is that you seem to be relatively enthusiastic about having the General Accounting Office undertake larger responsibilities in program evaluation. It seems to me there are substantial dangers in terms of having an agency, whose historic function, and I would even use the word mentality, is directed towards finding fraud and violations of law. You could get into what I think is a somewhat separate area, the determination of effectiveness of social programs. Under specific examples of some of the problems there are, I wonder if you would talk about that.

Answer: Two very good questions. The first one, as I indicated earlier we probably need to do less evaluation, at least in the short term. The figures that come out of OMB in terms of number of dollars spent on evaluation range over 200 million dollars last year. If you went to every agency and asked them you would probably arrive at a figure closer to 400 million. This gets back to the whole question of who is to do evaluation? What type of training should they have? I frankly think that there are very few people that really understand evaluation across the board and understand how it might be used effectively from a policy viewpoint. People at Northwestern University have a pretty good understanding of what evaluation is and how it might be utilized. I think we should encourage them to

train more people and to come in and to talk to legislators and their staffs. Now, let me just say, I don't have all the answers to that question. I don't think anybody does. You are going to have alot of wasteful evaluations; you are going to have alot of failures. Maybe nine out of ten, maybe nineteen out of twenty failures at this point in time. But what we have to do is, through groups like this, to establish standards and procedures which will encourage a developmental process. Most of you realize that to develop something you have to become more effective over time.

On the second question, the General Accounting Office's role. I've been one of the severest critics of the General Accounting Office. I've worked with them on trying to implement Title VII of the budget act. I have talked to the people in charge of the Office of Policy Analysis, now the Division of Policy Analysis and have indicated my greastest displeasure in what they're doing. For instance, the Comptroller General says that 40 percent of what they do is evaluation. I think it's probably closer to about 5 percent the way I define evaluation. The Comptroller General is very sympathetic to doing more and better evaluations. I think we should play on that, we need more people like yourselves to write him or if you know him personally to keep emphasizing that he has to do a better job. What is happening within the General Accounting Office, from my perspective, is that we have two or three people at the upper levels who have a full appreciation of evaluation needs but there is a whole level underneath the Comptroller General, five or six people, who are holding evaluation back. We need to push through these people down to the lower levels where people within the General Accounting Office have a better appreciation for what could be done. Also, there are a great number of other support agencies that can be helpful within the Congress. We have the Office of Technology Assessment, the Congressional Research Service and others. But all of these agencies combined, as I pointed out in my talk, cannot do very much. We really have to depend upon the agencies and the evaluation personnel within the agencies to develop evaluations that can be utilized by the Executive Office of the President and by the Congress. I don't want to give you my whole theory of American Government but, it seems to me that many times we aggregate together, the Executive Office of the President and the various departments and independent regulatory agencies. The time has come to recognize that the Executive Office is very separate from the departments and regulatory agencies. And the time has come for Congress to extend its hand to the Executive Office and the time has come for the President to extend his hand back and cooperate. Without that cooperation neither organization will really get the kind of information it needs to make the budget and policy decisions that they are called on to make.

Question: What do you suggest, some impressions about, what a good evaluation is? Could you give some criteria that you would apply to the evaluation studies that you consider as practical?

Answer: I previously listed the various steps that I think should be taken by a legislator and that is the perspective that I hold. First of all, you have to get the people involved to formulate questions which are answerable. For instance, for a child care program and you have a question – "how effective is this program and who does it impact?" We are just beginning to discover the extensiveness of child care in this country. Few people can afford child care, the very low income or non-income people and the upper income people. We now know that there is a great number of families in the middle income category that really have no child care alternative. This is the type of question that you have to formulate. Then you also have to get into, "what legislative language would be helpful in assisting evaluations to be done." We really don't know too much about what facilitates evaluation; but we know that there are at least seven or eight things that you might be thinking about. You want to make sure that the evaluation information is timely to the legislative process. We also want to make sure that legislative goals are fairly well established. You don't have to establish that in the legislation itself but they should be spelled out either in the committee report or in some type of paper which is utilized by whoever is undertaking the evaluation. All these things are interrelated. My own expertise in areas of measurement, design, and statistical analysis are not that great but I realize the importance of bringing in the experts that understand the range of techniques. That is what Congress should be doing? They should be hiring consultants and calling on their support agencies to give them good advice in terms of what might be utilized in terms of measurement techniques and what types of design might be appropriate for a particular evaluation so they can respond to a proposed executive evaluation.

Question: First of all, what channels of communication are used to get results of evaluations back to the Congress? Secondly, to what extent do they impact congressional decisions?

Answer: First, there's very little attention paid to evaluation on Capital Hill. For one reason, there are very few channels of communication which are greased, so to speak, so that you can get information into the system. I think we have a pretty large pool of people outside in the agencies and in the private sector who are doing evaluations who probably think to themselves, "well, I'd like to get this to someone who is going to make a decision on this particular program." It just doesn't happen very often. I think we need to change the procedures whereby Congress responds to this type of information. I personally have tried to open up these channels, mainly within Senator Brock's office. There is only one case out of hundreds of people that I've personally contacted in the last five years where we've had an absolute refusal to cooperate. This includes big name Democrats, Republicans, and people who really have no political affiliation. The Congress just doesn't utilize the expertise that we have around the country. I don't think we utilize it within the executive. There's not enough communication. I'm not an expert on communication theory, so I don't have alot of answers here, but I know that calling people, and getting them involved sometimes helps. We've utilized them to great advantage in the few areas that we've gotten into. Now what we need to do, in my opinion, is to push for utilization of experts within other congressional and state and local legislative offices. I've tried to assist others, frankly I have been pretty much of a failure. Senator Packwood and Senator Brooke and a couple of other Senators have been interested in this concept but never have been able to get into it and to open up the channels. It's a difficult thing to do. You have to have a entrepreneur type of person who

is willing to go out and solicit experts and to put their responses in a form which the senator, who is probably not that well versed in the many areas in which he's called upon to make decisions, can understand. And we have to train more people to do this type of work and place them in positions where they will have an impact.

On your second question, the impact. Well, maybe I have already answered it. There's very little impact and frankly I've been very frustrated. We've had thirty or forty meetings of the Evaluation Seminar over the last three years. We have a rotating group of people from the Hill. We never really get the same people coming. So there's really not the deep interest in evaluation as an instrument for Congress to use that I would hope for. But there is a growing awareness and the impact of evaluations is growing. I think it's up to people like you to take action, to become lobbyists, to develop training programs, and to do all those other things that will allow evaluation to be better utilized.

Let me also expand on my response to a previous question, that I'm talking about program evaluation like many people talked about PPBS. I don't want to leave you with that impression. We don't want to oversell it. In fact, you should go into a legislative office with the idea that you are going to undersell program evaluation and mention the failures, the possibility of failure, and so forth. But also mention what might happen if you do have a success or two along the way. Once members and their staffs understand this, then they won't be unduly upset when things don't work out that well. Many times you'll have an evaluation which may not be successful in a truly academic sense but at least you'll have a little more information to make a decision on and that's an improvement! We have to raise the level of debate within the legislative branches of all three levels of government and one way to do this is through program evaluation. There are other tools you can use too. I'm not saying that we should focus all our attention on program evaluation. There are many other things that we need to do together to raise the consciousness of our legislators.

Question: You talked about creating resources available to Congress and now you're talking about adding more in terms of evaluation consultants, evaluation training, and staff people. Do you see that as added staff or do you see that as a replacement of a present staff and if so which staff would you replace.

Answer: Well, first of all, replace the elevator operators who ride automatic elevators. Congressional staffs happen to be my academic interest. My dissertation was in the area and I'm just completing a book on the subject so you struck a very responsive chord. I could talk about this for hours. I probably have – how much more time do I have here? Another ten minutes or so. I won't spend ten minutes on this. First of all, we probably don't need many more staffs. We presently have 35 thousand plus staff persons within the legislative branch. Twelve or so thousand of these people are really not doing legislative duties, they're employed within the Government Printing Office, and other agencies which are really not supporting the legislative activities of Congress. If you look at the committee system in the House and Senate, we have just a little over 1,000 professionals. If you divide that between House and Senate, you have 500 professionals in the Senate and about an equal number in the House. So that's about one person for every billion dollars of the federal budget for each house. Within the Senate Finance Committee they have 12 professional staff people for about three-fourths of the federal budget if you count both revenues and expenditures. So they're each dealing theoretically with 60 plus billion dollars. We can use more staff on the Senate Finance Committee. We probably don't need more staff on the Senate Judiciary Committee or the Senate Government Operations Committee. In particular areas, we will employ more staff. In other areas, we probably won't hire many more. But the total figures and increases will be very limited. Probably the most important thing to emphasize is hiring quality people. We are, on the whole, hiring people who have professional backgrounds in areas where they're going to work. It's generally not a patronage system. I just talked to a staff director of a major committee. He didn't meet the chairman of the committee until the day he was hired. So these are the types of things that are happening more and more in Congress. You're getting a more professional system.

We don't have a civil service system. You have to realize that Congressional staff are very political. Most of what they do is political, they're involved in political activities. If you look at committees and personal offices as organizations made up of acts of people, they're basically performing political acts. What do we have to control? This is another subject. But in summary it is the campaign related activities of these people – re-electing members. Campaign nets are hard to separate from political acts but once you make that distinction then we're in pretty good shape.

In summary, I think that we will have modest staff increases over the next few years. We'll have to become very dependent on executive and support staffs for evaluation information within the Congress and we'll have to utilize the latest advances in technology including new types of information retrieval systems in the work that the staff is performing. Staff are often just reacting to a problem as it comes in from a constituency in one form or the other. We have to get away from that and utilize modern research and evaluation techniques. There's been great advances in the last two or three years. I'm very optimistic but it's not going to be an overnight success. It's going to be 10 or 15 years before we really develop a Congress which has some of these capacities.

Let me just say one other thing about this, we can't look at the Executive and the Congress as being involved in a game where everything controlled by the Congress has to be taken from the Executive. We are not in a zero sum game. What we're seeing is development of new capacities on the part of both the Executive and Congress. This is good. We're going to get a more enlightened debate within the Congress and between the Congress and the Executive and hopefully a more satisfied electorate. In turn, this will be reflected in the confidence that they have in the operation of government. I think the operation of government can be described in terms of every day activities and programs that are being performed. I think once we recognize that you have to look at programs as being the final act of governments and when people begin to realize that they are experiencing successes and seeing those successes

which are qualitatively or quantitatively described to them by politicians, then you're going to have a much greater acceptance of our system. If we don't develop these measures and the politicians don't take advantage of these social inventions and if this continued disillusionment with government continues, then you're going to probably see an opting for a solution of the extreme right or the extreme left. The person coming into power will say "I have a solution." "Just give me a little of your freedom and you won't have anymore worries." They'll have pretty much total control. We're in a very tight situation. I don't want to be a doomsayer, but we have to develop social inventions realizing that we're probably the only western society that's really getting into this. They aren't really developing evaluation technology in Europe, to my knowledge, as much as we are. We're in this thing to maybe save the democratic system in one sense. I don't want to sound like a evangelical speaker. But the success of our current system depends on this kind of information coming up, being accepted, and being utilized.

Question: It seems like you're recommending that we take action as individuals, contacting Congressmen and that sort of thing. It seems to me that as a group, the hundred and some of us that are here, it might be better to pool our qualities if we're going to attack this system at a system's level. Do you have any recommendations on how a group like this might become a more effective body?

Answer: Groups are effective because they have members and they mobilize those members. When I say to each one of you "do something." This could be orchestrated or organized by a staff person. You might write a note to this Senator of that Congressman. An important thing to realize is that in most policy areas you only have a handful of people that are really having a great impact on the policy area. For instance, tax legislation, there are probably only a dozen Senators and Congressmen who really take an interest in tax legislation. You have Senator Long, you have Congressman Uhlman, the two Chairmen of the respective House and Senate Tax Writing Committees, and you have five or six other key people on each side. If you know for every program who these key people are and who their key staff members are, then you can communicate things to them. Also, remember that it is important to communicate with the key people in the executive and the key interest groups. At this point you're beginning to develop a strategy that will have an impact. You really don't have to go after that many people. You have to have a strategy aimed at the pressure points, the cracks. As Morton Grodins, who established *The Atomic Scientist* at the University of Chicago, said, "Our system is made up of multiple cracks and you have to realize where these cracks are and you have to access them." (Paraphrased) What this organization and other organizations might do in the evaluation area is to make their members aware where those cracks are and say "You might want to do this or that. Make a call. Write a letter." You'd be surprised at the effect you will have, especially, if it's directed at the people that are making an impact on the policy decision.

Question: The strategies that you outlined creates awareness of the individual's potential and perhaps provides it in a utilizable form for influencing policy. So ultimately it's still up to the individual's discresion as to whether to use it or not. We'd like to think that somehow the voter can somehow influence that decision making by not voting for that person or retaining that person. I was wondering if there might be an alternative stretegy or notion. It seems that independent regulatory agencies as well as Congressmen have certain statutory duties and it seems that some class action suits might be initiated phrased in terms of breach of duty. I know that that's something that is rarely mentioned in any of the evaluations. Other people might do something and I was really wondering whether there might be a taxpayer suit or a suit by those affected by certain decisions where there is an evaluation, where, lets say the impossible is achieved, most people would agree with the accuracy of the evaluation.

Answer: In some cases, this might be very appropriate. You have to be very selective because of the cost. As you pointed out, a suit probably wouldn't be successful, be won, but we need some of these consciousness-raising devices in the evaluation areas, to make people aware that there are things out there that might give the policy makers a little more information about programs. Anything like this is good in the sense of raising people's consciousness.

Getting back to the campaign situation. We grossly underestimate the intellectual capacities of the voter. I'm just appalled at the quality of the campaigns that are run, and I think all of you are too. One thing we can do is insist, starting at the local level as many of these local level people will move up to state and national offices, that campaigns are run on a much higher level. For instance, discussion of the types of evaluations that are necessary in evaluation and policy making. Let's ask those kinds of questions of candidates. Let's get them on the record. Make them think about it even if it doesn't become a public issue in a particular race for the statehouse seat, Congressional seat, or Senatorial race. You can probably get the committment because evaluation at this point is "good." Get the committment of the member that he or she will use it and then when he or she gets into office you can call him and say "O.K., now what are you going to do?" They will have to respond to that. They will, at the minimum, have to put some staff time into figuring out what they can do to respond. If you keep harassing them and getting other people to do the same then you're going to be in good shape. You know all of this fits together and it's going to take a while but the overall potential is very good in terms of influencing policy and I think within 10 or 15 years most people will look back and say, "how could we ever have ignored the importance of evaluation in making policy decisions?"

Question: The *Congressional Record* provides a list of who voted for or against legislation. It might be interesting if somehow there was another column as to what the evaluation report found and the vote of the individuals on this report.

Answer: There've been a number of legislative suggestions which require certain types of evaluation. One of the problems is, and I skipped over this in my paper, is that evaluators many times develop one technique which they really like. You all know the analogy, a guy with a new hammer goes out and strikes at anything in his path. We have the same problem in the legislative branch. Staff, misdirected staff, have their Senator introduce legislation which

requires a cost benefit analysis pilot study of everything. This is wrong. I often talk to these people and I say, "listen, you have to look at the broad range of evaluation techniques and then decide which one is appropriate in a particular instance." We are going to have to develop an awareness of this problem within the Congress. Evaluators have a pretty positive image, right now, within the Congress. And I think the point is to keep that positive image and to give them some ammunition and give them some things that are going to help them in making decisions. And help them in the long run to get re-elected. Thank you. I appreciate very much the opportunity that you have given to me to talk with you.

TABLE 1

Frequency and Effectiveness of Program Evaluations

Frequency of Use

Once an Hour or More	*Once a Day*	*Once a Week*	*Once a Month*	*Once a Year*	*Not at All*	
11[1]	9	7	5	3	1	
5[2]	5	10	40	30	10	Mean Score = 5.10
(1[3])	(1)	(2)	(8)	(6)	(2)	

Perceived Effectiveness

Very	*Moderately*	*Not Very*	*Not at All*	*No Opinion*	
9[1]	7	5	3	1	
20[2]	65	5		10	Mean Score = 6.7
(4[3])	(13)	(1)		(2)	

[1] Score
[2] Percent
[3] Number of Respondents

NOTE: Tables 1-3 are based on a survey administered by the temporary select committee to study the Senate Committee System (1976).

TABLE 2

Ranking of Average Scores of Frequency and Effectiveness of Oversight Techniques[1]

	Frequency Rank with Mean Score		*Effectiveness Rank with Mean Score*	
Staff communication with agency personnel	1	8.95	2	7.25
Casework	2	6.85	11	5.30
Hearings and meetings	3	6.50	1	8.30
Senator's personal communication with agency officials	4	6.32	6	6.65
Staff investigations	5	6.20	3	6.9
Evaluation of agency programs	6	5.10	5	6.7
Congressional veto	7	4.35	7	6.05
Issuance of studies	8	4.25	8	5.8
Agency reporting requirements	9	3.95	13	4.8
Audits of agency programs	10	3.74	4	6.8
Statutory control	11	3.65	10	5.33
Authorization-Reauthorization	12	3.58	12	5.2
Appropriations (review of agency or program accounts)	13	3.40	14	4.5
Field hearings	14	3.15	9	5.55
Setting Congressional priorities through the new budget process	15	3.11	16	4.15
Confirmation of nominees	16	2.85	15	4.45

[1] Based on 20 responses to a questionnaire administered to chairmen and ranking member's designated Senate committee staff during the summer of 1976.

TABLE 3

Problems in Conducting Oversight[c]
N=20

	5 Major Problem		*3 Minor Problem*		*1 No Problem At All*	
Lack of Senator's time	55%[a] (11)[b]	5 (1)	30% (6)	(0)	55% (1)	(1)
Insufficient staff	40% (8)	(0)	45% (9)	(0)	15% (3)	(0)
Difficulty in obtaining information from agencies	20% (4)	5% (1)	60% (12)	(0)	10% (2)	(1)
Difficulty in obtaining information about agencies from elsewhere	25% (5)	5% (1)	40% (8)	(0)	30% (6)	(0)
Lack of staff expertise in specific areas needed to evaluate agency programs	10% (2)	5% (1)	50% (10)	(1)	30% (6)	(0)
Lack of press coverage or public attention	25% (5)	5% (1)	35% (7)	(1)	30% (6)	(0)

a – In percent
b – Number of responses
c – Based on partial questionnaire returns